time the government has attempted to stamp out gambling, but its efforts have been in vain. All classes, from the highest official circles to the poorest laborers, have indulged in it. Travellers in the interior will not soon forget how the coolies who have carried their burdens by day have spent the night in gambling, often in the next room separated only by a thin partition—to the great annoyance of their employer. Some other games have not been so frequently associated with gambling. One of these is much like Western chess and very possibly has a common origin. As is well known, chess has been found in many different countries and ages and may go back to an Indian prototype.

A center of gossip and a place for spending the idle and lighter hours has been the tea shop. Here, over a cup of that innocuous beverage, neighbors or casual acquaintances exchange news. Here, too, comes the professional story-teller with his entertaining narratives.

It may be noted that the Chinese have not been so violently addicted to the excessive consumption of alcoholic drinks as have been some of the Northern European peoples. Fermented liquors have been used widely and for centuries. That most generally seen is derived from rice and is distilled—once, and for stronger brands twice and even three times. Drunkenness has been by no means unknown. There even seem to have been periods, as under the T'ang, when it has been fairly prevalent. In the nineteenth century, however, it was not nearly so common as in the England or the United States of that time. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries opium has played a part in China somewhat like that which liquor has had in Anglo-Saxon lands. Its moderate use has been very widespread and excessive indulgence in

it all too common—to the moral, physical, and financial undoing of its victims and the sorrow and suffering of their relatives and dependents. As has been noted in earlier chapters, the rapid rise in the consumption of opium was due in large part to trade with Westerners and was associated with the commercial invasion of the Occident. Opium has been produced extensively in China, however, and of late years the growth of the opium poppy has become once more a major problem. Some estimates indicate that the total production may be ten times that of the rest of the world. The reason for this popularity of opium in China—greater than in any other